‘May God Shield us from the Plague.’ Vernacular Remedies for the Plague from Moyshe Kalish's Yiddish Self-help Medical Book *Seyfer Yerum Moyshe* (Amsterdam 1679)

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**Abstract**

Between the years 1650 and 1800, Amsterdam became the center of Yiddish printing. Vernacular medical writings were among the variety of Yiddish books published in Amsterdam. The Yiddish remedies book *Seyfer Yerum Moyshe*, published in 1679, was written by Moyshe Rofe mi-Kalish. In this article I intend to examine the paratexts of this book and present as a case study the doctor’s recommendations to confront the plague. He explains his remedies are credible and have been tried by many doctors. His book would not only save its readers from having to call a doctor and pay him a lot of money, but also give them remedies they can prepare in their homes or find in their pharmacies. Whether rich or poor, everyone should have access to remedies. Kalish stresses the fact that ultimately leading a pious life, together with these remedies, will promise health and longevity, with G-d’s help.

**Keywords**

During the early modern period, a great body of knowledge in Yiddish catered to the enlightenment of all the Ashkenazi Jews who insufficiently understood the Hebrew language sources.\(^1\) Between the years 1650 and 1800, Amsterdam became the principal center of Yiddish printing for the entire ‘Land of Ashkenaz’ and thus Amsterdam turned into an international market for Yiddish books.\(^2\)

In Shlomo Berger’s (z”l) comprehensive study of early modern Yiddish books in Amsterdam, he argue[s] that the Yiddish paratexts contained a morale that served a purpose in a Jew’s life. The content, layout, and rhetorical styles presented on title pages of early modern Yiddish books were organized around the central goal of ‘producing redemption,’ stressing that publishing books in Ashkenaz had a clear religious purpose.\(^3\)

Vernacular medical writings were also among the variety of Yiddish books published in Amsterdam.\(^4\) The Yiddish remedies book *Seyfer Yerum Moyshe*,\(^5\) published in 1679, was written by Moyshe Rofe mi-Kalish.\(^6\) In this article I intend to examine the paratexts of this book and present the doctor’s recommendations to ward off the plague as a case study. Vernacular remedy books in general were filled with advice on how to deal with the plague. The plague was a central part of life in the early modern period and the belief was that one must treat such sickness by returning to a life in accord with God’s will.

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4. I gratefully borrowed this term from Fisell: ‘The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a huge increase in literacy and in books aimed at novice readers ... pamphlets, and newspapers began to proliferate. So too did popular medical books, those which proclaimed themselves to be for “the use of families” or “the meanest capacity” rather than for physicians and surgeons. Very few English men and even fewer women ever read a Latin anatomical text, but almost everyone encountered models of the body in ... religious works, and popular medical books at the centre of this study ... I call these models of the body “vernacular” because they were newly available in small cheap printed books that came to circulate far more widely than had manuscripts or than did books for learned readers.’ Mary E. Fisell, ‘Introduction,’ in *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Oxford 2004) 1–2.
5. The only surviving copy of *Seyfer Yerum Moyshe* can be seen at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, Opp. 40. 938 (6).
6. Kalish was also the author of *Yerushas Moyshe*, published in Wilmersdorf in 1677, also a medical work in Yiddish describing remedies for various diseases, yet it is in his revised book, *Seyfer Yerum Moyshe*, published two years later in Amsterdam, that Kalish gives his advice and remedies for the plague.
through repentance and prayer. When illness struck, the Jews turned to barbers, surgeons or ba’aley-shemot (mystical healers) depending on the nature of the sickness. Charms and remedies of all kinds were tried, and they usually satisfied the Jewish communities.

Yet when it came to pandemics such as the plague, where entire households were struck, amulets and mystical remedies were not enough. However, not everyone could afford a doctor or had the means to buy just any book. In Seyfer Yerum Moyshe, the author Moyshe Kalish assures the readers that his remedies are boduk u-menusey (tried and tested), as well as supported with approbations of doctors and rabbis. Kalish's sole intention is helping those who were too poor to call a doctor: 'While the rich may die before he is able to call the doctor, the poor dies [without calling the doctor] because he has no money, alas.'

This claim exposes a measure of social critique – and before God all are eventually equal. A book of remedies may serve both rich and poor in the same manner, since the offered remedies do not recognize dissimilarities between the well-off and the impoverished. Whether the poor, in fact, could purchase materials for preparing the remedies themselves is another question. The author does imply that some remedies could be put together from cheaply available materials and the Yiddish remedy book would be very helpful.

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8 H.J. Zimmels, Magicians, Theologians, and Doctors (London 1952) 99–106; Jakobovits, Jewish Medical Ethics, 10–41.
10 Formula used also in Hebrew remedy books, stressing that the remedies have experienced and are efficient.
11 Preface to Seyfer Yerum Moyshe (Amsterdam 1679).
12 Another aspect about the impact on the rich and poor at the outburst of the plague in 1713 in Prague, is given by Moses ben Hayim Eisenstadt (Yiddish): 'And the plague struck hard ... In the community, as soon as everybody caught it, a terrible fear gripped us. Everyone wanted to flee, to escape ... and what are they to do, the poor who remember seeing all the rich people leaving to save their own skin? We, we are compelled to stay behind in misfortune!' Moses ben Hayim Eisenstadt, Eyn naye kloglid, ms. Oxford, Opp. 8, 643 (4).
13 On the impact of books in the vernacular as a tool for guidance, Berger brings the example of Seyfer Yerum Moyshe's preface to reinforce his argument that Yiddish books sought to 'produce redemption,' explaining that Yiddish books can also be considered a type of medicine that was recommended in every possible way and on a broad spectrum of areas. See Berger, Producing Redemption, 101.
Vernacular medical writing in early modern Europe was common in other languages as well. In the Netherlands vernacular medical booklets were also published and they were popular on the book market. Some examples are the books by the Dordrecht physician Johan van Beverwijck (1594–1647), who published his *Schat der ongesontheyt, ofte geneeskonste van de sieckten* (1642), and the famous Amsterdam physician Steven Blankaart (1650–1704), who published his *Nieuw lichtende praktyk der medicynen* (1678). Blankaart stresses in the preface that his work is based on ‘the finest authors in these times, as well as contemporary alchemy, and rich local medicines foreseen in the Dutch apothecary.’

More generally, studies of popular medical books such as those by Mary Fissell and Roy Porter have demonstrated the continued vitality of alternative medical knowledge on the print market. In part this was because the medicines, therapies and expertise of physicians, surgeons and apothecaries were often only obtainable for the elite in this period, due to their high costs and limited availability. Ordinary people thus commonly resorted to other sources of medical expertise found in medical self-help books, recipe books and almanacs. And as a result, the Ashkenazic reading public was more easily and naturally approached in their vernacular language – Yiddish.

In the early modern period, there was only a rudimentary understanding that disease could be passed from person to person or through the air. This was partially based on the belief that diseases were caused by ‘bad air,’ mainly known in the rabbinic literature and referred to as ‘ipush ha-avir.’ Yiddish medical texts include several references to epidemics and plagues that struck the Jewish communities of Europe. There was a constant search for the ultimate protection against disease. Magic was multicultural rather than ethnic,
so there are many similarities between elements of Jewish magic in Eastern Europe and similar manifestations in Christian society. Magical knowledge connected to healing and traditional herbal medicine was found among both Jews and Christians who were familiar with the traditions regarding the healing powers of local flora, and who combined this knowledge with incantations.18

Some Jewish mystics were believed to be able to communicate with G-d, and their mystical skills at times gave them the power to intercede in the heavenly court to stop plagues.19 Nimrod Zinger describes how in his book Migdal Oz, the renowned Rabbi Jacob Emden (1697–1776) explained that sins are responsible for most human suffering, since G-d punishes those who do not follow the path.20 This reaffirms the unshakable belief of the European Jewish society in the power of G-d to punish those who sinned by bringing them disease and misfortune and in contrast to heal those who follow the straight path.21

Avriel Bar-Levav discusses the place of magic in the ethical literature, into which the remedy books also found their way. Yiddish ethics literature as well reflects the very presence of magic in the spiritual world of believers. Magical conceptions are not usually central to ethics literature; they can even be marginal, but they are present.22

Finally, Gries describes the need or demand for medical booklets, which gave birth to small medical books (Sifre refu’ot u-segulot) in Hebrew and in Yiddish as well. According to Gries, these books did not purport to be pocket encyclopedias for any troubles of health, physical or mental distress and did not encompass all the medical fields. They served essentially as auxiliary literature and books of advice on the treatment of maternity, infants and common diseases, virtues for various matters in human life, as well as protection against epidemics.23

As to my case study of Seyfer Yerum Moyshe, the doctor’s recommendations and remedies for the plague do not contain any magical spells. Kalish

23 Z. Gries, The Literature of Customs: Its History and Place in the Life of the Followers of the Besht (Jerusalem 1993) 95–96 [Hebrew]. Among the most predominant Hebrew remedy books dealing with the plague in the early modern period, destined for scholars and fluent Hebrew readers were: Yaacov Tsahalon, Otsar ha-Hayim (Venice 1683); Abraham Catalano, Olam Hafukh (Padua 1621); Yaacov Pessach, Zevakh Pessach (Zamosc 1722).
emphasizes that he learned from the best doctors in Italy and reassures his readers that his knowledge is based on Hippocrates and Galen.\textsuperscript{24} Our doctor’s full name is Moyshe Rofe mi-Kalish ben Benjamin Wolf mi-Meseritz,\textsuperscript{25} and he was a Polish physician who had studied medicine in Italy. Considered by all a learned and conscientious doctor, Moyshe Kalish was born in Kalisz, Poland, and lived continuously in his family town as a popular practitioner. He died of old age and was buried in his hometown. His son, who was also a known doctor, continued his father’s legacy in their hometown, where in his time he had a large practice.\textsuperscript{26}

In his introduction, Kalish also brings approbations in Hebrew (see Fig. 1) of no less than seven physicians from Padua, Verona, and Venice, as well as of the rabbi of Padua, Rabbi Semaria Conian (=Conegliano),\textsuperscript{27} and thus renders his remedies more credible. These are the approbations of Solomon Conian (=Conegliano) and Isaac Chaim Cohen (=Cantarini),\textsuperscript{28} both doctors from Padua, Emanuel Sepilli,\textsuperscript{29} Baruch Levi ben Isaac,\textsuperscript{30} Gedalja Romanin,\textsuperscript{31} Joseph

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} On the nature of the plague and on purging the air according to Galen and Hippocrates, see A. Wear, \textit{Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550–1680} (Cambridge 2000) 303–304, 320–324.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Moyshe Kalish is mentioned among the Polish students who came to study in Italy. See J. Shatzky, ‘Jewish Medical Students of Padua,’ \textit{Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences} 5 (1950) 445–446; S. Krauss, \textit{Geschichte der jüdischen Ärzte vom frühesten Mittelalter bis zur Gleichberechtigung} (Vienna 1930) 150; M. Steinschneider, ‘Jüdische Aerzte (ZHB),’ in A. Freimann, \textit{Hebraische Bibliographie} (Frankfurt am Main 1914) 166; Lewin, \textit{Beiträge zur Geschichte der Juden in Kalisch} (Kempen in Posen 1909) 31.
\item \textsuperscript{26} This information is based on M. Bersohn, \textit{Słownik biograficzny uczonych żydow polskich XVI, XVII i XVIII wieku / zebrał i tresciwie opisał} (Warsaw 1905) 61–62. My requests for more information on the doctor in the Kalisch archives, in order to corroborate information on his life and death in Kalish, were unfruitful.
\item \textsuperscript{27} On Rabbi Semaria Conegliano, see A. Salah, \textit{Le République des Lettres: Rabbins, écrivains et médecins juifs en Italie au XVIIIe siècle} (Brill 2007) 201.
\item \textsuperscript{28} E. Carmoly, \textit{Histoire des médecins juifs anciens et modernes} (Brussels 1884) 234–235; Zalman Shazar, \textit{Ha-tiqva li-shnat ha-ta”q: The Messianic Hope for the Year 1740} (Jerusalem 1970) [Hebrew].
\item \textsuperscript{29} Known as Sepilli Emanuele di Moise. See A. Modena and E. Morpurgo, \textit{Medici e chirurghi ebrei dottorati e licenziati nell’Università di Padova dal 1617 al 1816} (Bologna 1967) 35.
\item \textsuperscript{30} G. Sholem, \textit{Indices to the Emden-Eybeschuetz Controversy Literature} (Jerusalem 2006) 63 [Hebrew]; Steinschneider, ‘Jüdische Aerzte,’ 78.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Most probably also known as Romanin Moise. See Modena and Morpurgo, \textit{Medici e chirurghi ebrei}, 46.
\end{itemize}
Baruch Cazes,³² doctors from Venice, and David Chaim Luria ben Simeon,³³ a
doctor from Verona.

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Doctor Solomon Conegliano, whom Kalish mentions as his first approbation, taught medicine at the universities of Mantua and Padua. Among his outstanding students his son Israel Conian, Tuvia Cohen, and also our Moyshe Kalish are mentioned. Doctor Solomon Conegliano led a preparatory school for Jewish students who wished to enter the Padua University, but lacked a knowledge of Latin and Italian. Conegliano's home was also for many of these students their Jewish home away from home.

Moyshe Kalish clarifies to his readers in the title page (see Fig. 2) why he has decided to call his second book Seyfer Yerum Moyshe. With this small paratext, brought first in Hebrew, we also learn more about his medical education:

The book's title is based on Exodus 17:11: ‘When Moses held up his hand,’ but the text of the title page also points out that the letters YARUM (held up) in Hebrew form an anagram of the name Rome, the city where Kalish

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34 On Solomon Conegliano and his school, see the introduction to Ma’aseh Tuviyah as well as the preface written by Solomon Conegliano himself, and also D. Ruderman, ‘The Impact of Science on Jewish Culture and Society in Venice,’ in G. Cozzi, ed., Gli ebrei e Venezia (Milan 1987) 417–418.
35 D. Kaufmann, Dr. Israel Conegliano und seine Verdienste um die Republik Venedig bis nach dem Frieden von Carlowitz (Budapest 1895).
36 On the medical textbook Ma’aseh Tuviyah of Tuvia ha-Cohen (Tobias Cohen), see D. Ruderman, Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe (Detroit 2001) 229–255; for a complete analysis of Ma’ase Tuviya, see K. Collins, S. Kottek and H. Paavilainen, Ma’ase Tuviya Venice 1708: Tuviya on Medicine & Science (Jerusalem 2021).
37 S. Muntner, Contribution to the History of the Hebrew Language in Medical Instruction (Jerusalem 1943) 29 [Hebrew]; R. Landau, Geschichte der jüdischen Ärzte: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Medicin (Berlin 1895) 76.
38 On Jewish doctors who studied at the University of Padua in the 16th–17th century, see D. Carpi, ‘Yehudim ba’aley doktor le-refu’ah mi-ta’am universitat Padova ba-me’ah ha-tet-zayn u-bereshit ha-me’ah ha-yud-zayn,’ in Scritti in memoria di Nathan Cassuto (Jerusalem 1986) 62–91.
39 On the Conegliano family, see H. Friedenwald, The Jews and Medicine (Baltimore 1944), vol. 2: 603–604; Ruderman, Jewish Thought, 114.
received his doctor's title with great honors. Kalish continues in Yiddish and defends the importance and usage of his medical book. In order to attract the attention of potential readers, Kalish makes the extra effort of writing in rhymes, a common stylistic technique in that period.
Dear readers. Look what I have prepared for you. A remedies book in Yiddish, so that no one will make mistakes. One can read from it and learn how many illnesses can be cured and what you need for it. Many doctors have studied hard for it, as did the doctors from Padua and Venice, who gave me their approbations. This you will find on the following page. They were with me while learning medicine and they were also there when I was examined with difficult questions. These are my words,

The author Moyshe Rofe of the holy community of Kalish, son of Benjamin Wolf, May G-d avenge his blood.

While the remedy books gave technical knowledge for treating diseases, ethics and health were interwoven with the Jewish tradition. In many kehillot special Taqanot in Yiddish were issued during epidemics, urging the community members to behave according to the Halacha and avoid sinning. Diseases that indiscriminately affected all the members of the community and for which there was no effective remedy were perceived by the rabbinic authorities as exemplary divine punishments.

Yiddish remedy books were adamant about one ground rule: One must treat sickness by returning to a life according to God’s will, through repentance and prayer. Kalish simultaneously aims at the reader’s heart and at his pocket... He explains his remedies are dependable and have been tried by many doctors. This book will not only save them from having to call a doctor, waiting for him to come, paying him a lot of money, but also gives them remedies they can prepare in their own homes or find in local pharmacies. Whether rich or poor,
everyone should have access to remedies; the poor should not die before their time. Kalish accentuates again that the combination of using his remedies and leading a pious life will guarantee them health and longevity, with G-d’s help. Just like the title page of the book, this gifted author has written his introduction in rhymes, in order to more effectively attract the attention of his readers.

Introduction

Dear readers, look at this beautiful medical book I have prepared. I have learned from all medical books and have put a lot of thought in it. For your sake, dear pious readers. I have travelled throughout the world, length and width, and I have seen and experienced a lot of things.

How many bad things happened to people, a lot of people who died before their time. Rich as well as poor. They must all die in their time.

The rich man sends out for a doctor before he thinks of leaving this world. While the poor does not have the money for that, and must leave this world before his time. That is why I have prepared this book in Yiddish. So that everybody can enjoy it. I have gathered the best from all the medical books, And thus G-d will protect from all evil.

Whoever will read this book. You will find your needs in this book. And you will find in it all kinds of remedies.
Thus you can save your money and your health as well. And I will be your guide. How to prepare your remedies in your own home. And let *Seyfer Yerum Moyshe* brighten your face. That with G-d's help, will remedy many illnesses.

Kalish emphasizes that the ingredients of his remedies are accessible to all. Even though he brings recipes from various countries, the names of the herbs and the potions that are mentioned in this book are understood in all pharmacies:

You must also pay attention to the following: that all the remedies written in this book are written in the same way that they are named in the pharmacies. They are called differently in other countries. But the pharmacists everywhere call them by the same names, and that way, you will not fail in finding them.

In his book, Kalish introduces his readers to the origins of a pandemic and explains how to recognize whether someone has been infected. Once the diagnosis has been established, the doctor provides the readers with practical suggestions and remedies. Kalish recounts what has been learned from Hippocrates and Galen and then proceeds by clarifying how current doctors have already gained much more understanding about dealing with the plague.
The only definite mark that was deemed by all to be typical of the disease were the notorious buboes.\textsuperscript{42}

Kalish explains the causes for an outbreak of the plague:

It usually begins after a war, or when it is a very rainy year, or when the prices of food are very high. This causes bad growth of food and wine and people are obliged to eat all kinds of food and drink bad wine. All these causes can lead to an outbreak of the plague.\textsuperscript{43}

The doctor’s explanations of this illness were perceived as the result of a confluence of physiological agents, like humors, heredity, and contagion. Dominated by the doctrine of Hippocrates, medical science until the 17th century based its notion of corporal harmony on Galen’s theory of the equilibrium of the four ‘humors,’ which correspond to the four elements: earth (dry and cold), air (moist and hot), fire (hot and dry), and water (cold and wet). These humors thus define the balance of hot and cold, wet and dry, which together form the general equilibrium of the healthy human body. The four bodily humors were related to the four elements: yellow bile (fire), blood (air), phlegm (water), and black bile (earth). When the humors are unbalanced, illness is the result.\textsuperscript{44}

Imbalance caused by excess of any of these elements was a common concern addressed by classical, as well as early modern physicians. Humors might be imbalanced by changes in climate as well as diet, and medical treatises identified a range of foods to consume or avoid for protection from or in response to the plague. According to Hippocrates, in any event of unbalance of the humors, bloodletting is to be performed on the ill person, usually by a doctor or someone who is experienced in performing it.\textsuperscript{45}

The Italian physician Girolamo Fracastoro wrote in his famous \textit{De Contagion, contagiosis morbis et eorum curature libri III} (1546), about his three-fold view of contagion theory, that is, through direct contact, indirect contact, or from a distance. It is his argument that played a vital role in understanding how epidemics evolve, and it was regarded by his contemporaries as an additional commentary on top of Galen’s theory on contagion.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Seyfer Yerum Mayshe}, 23 [52].
\textsuperscript{44} On Hippocratic and Galenic definitions on the presence of plague, see S.K. Cohn Jr., \textit{Cultures of Plague: Medical Thinking at the End of the Renaissance} (Oxford 2010) 168–173.
\textsuperscript{45} On the dangers of bloodletting, see Wear, \textit{Knowledge and Practice}, 379–380.
Kalish explains further to his readers how one can know for sure that someone has been infected by the plague and what symptoms can be expected to appear on the person. He describes not only the physical state but also the mental state of such a sick person.

And this is how one recognizes if a person has caught it or not.
First, he loses all his strength.
He cannot evacuate anything from his body and he wants to vomit.
His heart rate goes very high.
An elder person sleeps a lot and a younger person does not sleep at all.
And everything he does, seems to him to be like a dream.

And everything falls out of his hands.
In his body he feels extreme heat, yet from the outside he feels shivers and cold.
If he does have bowl movements, they stink immensely.
By the third day it infects his head and the sick person acts like a drunk.
His limbs feel very heavy and his heart becomes weak and he feels irritated.
He does not want to eat or drink, thus it can be understood.
The common symptoms of the plague described in the early modern period were fairly similar and are described in Dr. Thomas Sydenham’s medical book as well:

... recurring shivering, the pulse can be unequal, sometimes low, sometimes quick, a heaviness in the head so considerable that the sick person could scarce support it, appearing to be seized with a stupidity and confusion, like that of a drunken person....47 ... The sight fixed or wandering, or dull, expressing fearfulness and despair; the voice slow, interrupted, complaining. The tongue almost always white, towards the end dry, reddish, black. The face is frighteningly pale. Frequent vomiting or inclination to vomit. Mortal inquietudes. A general sinking and faintness....48

Kalish suggests two kinds of evacuations for curing the plague: bloodletting and sweating. These were commonly accepted and recommended among doctors in early modern Europe. Kalish explains that bloodletting is to be attempted only in the first days of the illness; at a later stage this may seem too dangerous and cause immediate death. Otherwise he highly recommends it. As for the second form of evacuation – sweating – Kalish’s directions are more precise. He explains which herbs and drinks should be prepared, how to prepare them, when they should be given, and how often.

Although Kalish does not exactly explain how much and how often it should be done, much can be learned from Dr. Thomas Sydenham, also known as ‘The English Hippocrates,’ the author of Observationes Medicae,49 which served as a standard textbook of medicine for two centuries. In this book, published approximately in the same period as Moyshe Kalish’s, he describes in detail the amounts of bloodletting in the first days, based on information gathered from his and other physicians’ experiences.50 As for sweating, which is the other method proposed by Kalish, Dr. Sydenham also advises to continue this method without intermission for 24 hours, with the addition of about a fourth part of aqua theriacalis and a proper quantity of syrup of lemons to sweeten it.51 Whether either of these methods, bleeding or sweating, were ever really successful in curing the sick is quite doubtful, due to the high death toll of the plague in those times.

50  Sydenham, Entire Works, 69–93.
Kalish continues by explaining how one can help the plagued person during the first difficult days and which remedies are to be concocted.

How to treat the plagued [person] in the first 24 hours. First he should be bloodlet. Then one proceeds as Doctor Hippocrates says: however the nature of the person acts, one should proceed accordingly in order to help this person. If his bowels do not function or if he wants to throw up, one should help him with it. These are the remedies to be used:

Take the syrup called syrup emetic,52 5 quints53 and add radish seeds water, 4 lots.54 Let it heat up and give it to him [the ill person], so that he will vomit. Until his stomach will be entirely loosened, then only should he be purged.55

52 A syrup that causes vomiting; I am deeply indebted to Prof. Samuel Kotttek and Dr. Helena Paviliaanen, who have guided me in the medieval and early modern world of medicinal plants and herbal medicine.
53 One quint equals approx. 3.5 g.
54 One lot equals approx. 13 g.
55 Purge: cleansing, empty bowels.
For cleansing of the bowels, one should give him the following on the third day after the person has been bloodlet.\textsuperscript{56} Take one ounce of Cerifera mertice\textsuperscript{57} (berries) with 5 lots of Buglossa (ox-tongue)\textsuperscript{58} leaves or flower in hot water. Mix and give hot to drink. Then he will cleanse himself and abstain from food and drink for three hours, as I wrote before regarding cleansing. But after three days no purge nor bloodletting is allowed.

After three days, one should give him in the morning on an empty stomach and at night, two hours after he has eaten and gone to bed, one should give him something [a potion] to make him sweat, and not always the same potion, as I have mentioned earlier for the eyes [in another remedy], but switch between morning and evening every day.

\textsuperscript{56} The reason is as follows: bloodletting leaves the ill person weakened, and therefore he needs to gather his strength and recover a bit and therefore it is only after three days that the purgative can be given.

\textsuperscript{57} Also known as Myrica Cerifera.

\textsuperscript{58} From Latin Buglossa, from Greek Bouglossos, literally ‘ox-tongued,’ from bous ‘ox, bull, cow’ and glōssa ‘tongue.’ Its name stems from the shape and texture of its leaves.
Take 2 lots of Conservum Acetosa.\(^{59}\)

Take Conserva Rosarum und Buglossa. Make a confection\(^{60}\) or from each one lot. Half a lot of Diamargariti Frigidi powder\(^{61}\) with Conservum Rosarum\(^{62}\) so that it will have a good taste and give it to him.

Another recipe for sweating. Take half a quint of Diamargariti Frigidi powder and a third quint of Wermouth\(^{63}\) confection, with 6 lots of Buglossa water, and make a potion and let him [the ill person] drink it.

And if you want to make him sleep, then you should substitute a bit of the potion in the evening with poppy juice,\(^{64}\) 4 lots, instead of the other potion, and give this amount so he can sleep well. If you do so, you will not have to fear that blisters or swelling will appear on the body. Just continue to give him the drinks for sweating and do not bring him into the cold. And it will be good with G-d's help.

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59 Known also as Rumex acetosa.
60 Thick syrup.
61 Pulverized pearls, one of the cooling powers from Galen.
62 Rose sugar.
63 Vermut.
64 Also known as *Papaver somniferum* or German *Schlafmohn*.
From early modern historiography we learn that when it came to health and well-being, significant factors were wealth and poverty. Even more so when it came to the plague. This we can fully grasp nowadays, having realized the economic effect the Covid-19 pandemic has on our world today.

Whoever had the financial means would run away and those who did not would stay and suffer the consequences. Vernacular medical writing in early modern Europe was common in other languages as well. Kalish rightfully approached the Ashkenazic reading public in their vernacular language, Yiddish. *Seyfer Yerum Moyshe*’s paratexts were organized around the central goal of ‘producing redemption,’ stressing that publishing books in Ashkenaz had a clear religious purpose. The Yiddish paratexts in *Seyfer Yerum Moyshe* contained a morale that served a purpose in a Jew’s life. Moyshe Kalish was well aware of that and wanted to make a difference by bringing practical knowledge and remedies into the Jewish homes of Ashkenaz. His was a Yiddish book of remedies that could serve both rich and poor in a similar manner. The only way Kalish could reach his people was by transmitting his remedies in the *mame-loshn*, and thus *Seyfer Yerum Moyshe* found a proud place on the bookshelf of the Ashkenazi home.